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Author(s): Cebolla Boado, Héctor

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**PARENTAL PREFERENCES FOR SCHOOLS:  
The concentration of co-ethnics in British schools**

Héctor Cebolla Boado

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Héctor Cebolla Boado is a Ph.D. Student at the *Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences*, Juan March Institute, Madrid, currently preparing his doctoral dissertation on “The Educational Attainment of Immigrants”.

## 1. Research question and the relevance of the topic

This paper analyses parental preferences for school concentration of co-ethnics among five ethnic minorities in Britain<sup>1</sup>. The effects of segregation on ethnic status attainment are one of the most relevant topics in the field of ethnic studies. In particular, the concentration of ethnic minorities in schools is the one of the most controversial issues that is currently being investigated in Europe, and a longstanding field of research in the US regarding the topic of ethnicity and education (Rodríguez 2002, Driesen and Bezemer 1999, Portes and MacLeod 1996, Portes 1995, Gibson 1991, Gibson and Ogbu 1991, Matute-Bianchi 1991). In the US, this area has been widely studied since the 1960's. The Coleman Report (Coleman 1966), evaluated the performance and opportunities of minority students in comparison with white ones<sup>2</sup>. One of the most striking conclusions of the Coleman Report was that both white and black students' academic outcomes tended to be poorer when they attended classes which did not have a white majority and, also, that students, at segregated schools, performed poorer than others. This report encouraged the idea that schools be integrated in the US in order to have a racial class mixed of students (Brown 2000)<sup>3</sup>. This finding, however, has been supported by certain empirical literature (Hartog 2000, Hoxby 2000, Bankston and Caldas 1996, Brooker, Krueger and Wolkon 1992). Recently it has also been challenged by many scholars that concluded that effects of school segregation are at best modest (Cloud 2002, Caille and La Vallet 2000, Rivkin 2000).

Differences in educational attainment across ethnic groups led to the idea of the existence of an *ethnic effect*. The *ethnic effect*, responsible for the existence of inter-group differences on education/occupational attainments, supposedly strengthens the negative consequences of attending less privileged schools, where the children of the less advantaged ethnic communities concentrate (Suarez-Orozco 1987, Zhou and Bankston 1994). Portes,

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<sup>1</sup> These are Bangladeshis, Caribbean, Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis.

<sup>2</sup> Years before the US Supreme Court declared that school segregation supposed a big psychological damage to Blacks (Brown Vs Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483-1954)

<sup>3</sup> Apart from enhancing individual educational attainment, highly mixed schools are also supposed to reduce racism and ethnic divisions. The well-known "*Contact Hypothesis*" (the more that individuals can meet and thus learn about members of other ethnic groups, the more prejudices and stereotypes will be undermined) has been a major motive for policy design both in the US and Europe (see Connolly 2000 for more).

theorising about the effect of community closure, says that the concentration of co-ethnics in schools reinforces the common cultural memory brought by other generations from their homelands and creates an emergent sentiment of *we-ness* facing the host society that reinforces community norms and collectively expected behaviours (Portes 1996:256). The consequences of this process are evidently divergent for economically successful ethnic minorities (i.e. upward mobile ones), than for disadvantaged or downward mobile groups. The reason is that within upward and downward groups, the collectively expected behaviour shaping individual action may differ to a great extent (MacLeod 1995).

School concentration of co-ethnics is the logical consequence of both a particular institutional setting and decisions made by families. This paper analyses the second element through parental preferences. Studies of preferences for ethnic concentration are very scarce. Most studies of ethnic segregation and concentration try to explain and identify the profile of individuals already living/working/studying in ethnic homogeneous environments. The lack of analysis concerning preferences for ethnic concentration might be due to the lack of data<sup>4</sup>.

This justifies the importance of analysing parental preferences for co-ethnic concentration while choosing a school for their children, and, to a certain extent, its relevance to understanding the existence of differentials in the levels of educational attainment across groups. The questions that this paper tries to answer are the following: *how are parental preferences regarding the concentration of co-ethnics at schools distributed in the United Kingdom (UK)?, are they homogeneous or do they show different patterns by ethnic groups?,* and, in that case, *why do such differences exist across groups and how can they be explained?.* This paper can also shed some light in explaining the formation of wider processes of ethnic concentration and segregation.

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<sup>4</sup> Some datasets like the German Socioeconomic Panel permits the study of the profile of children depending on the amount of ethnic concentration in schools but not of their parent's preferences.

## 2. Why the case of Britain? Ethnic minorities in the UK

There are two reasons for choosing Britain as the case for this study. First of all, the availability of data. Research on ethnic minorities is hindered by the difficulty of finding datasets with large enough samples of individuals from any ethnic minority. The problems are bigger if the research requires inter-group comparisons. The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FNSEM 1994) is a survey including fully representative sub-samples of people of Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani ethnic background living in Britain. In concrete 5.196 adults from 3.315 households, responded to one of the two questionnaires from the survey in England and Wales<sup>5</sup>. This survey is considered unquestionably the most thorough specialist survey of ethnic minorities (Berthoud 1998)<sup>6</sup>.

Another reason to justify the selection of Britain as a case for this study is that the UK presents a wide variation in the economic and social performance across ethnic groups<sup>7</sup>. The UK has a long tradition of attracting not only less educated immigrants but also highly skilled workers, (mainly from Hong Kong, India, Taiwan and other Asian countries). In the UK Chinese and Indians enjoy levels of income similar to those of the white population or even over-achieve them. African and Caribbean people are worse off than these groups while Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are much poorer than any other group in the United Kingdom (Moodod et al. 1997, Berthoud 1998 and 2000, Heath and Clifford 1990, Heath and McMahon 2001). The shockingly bad situation of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis has been remarked on consistently by all the empirical literature on ethnic minorities in the UK. Moodod et al. showed how a Bangladeshi or a Pakistani with a degree had the same risk of poverty as a white person with no qualifications at all (see Moodod et al. 1997, figure 5.4).

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<sup>5</sup> The sample in the initial analysis is 2669. Only half of the respondents were included in the first questionnaire (E1) but the sub-sample still being representative for each group (FNSEM 1994: appendix).

<sup>6</sup> Other big studies such as the British Household Panel or the British Cohort Study (1970) include in their samples respondents from diverse ethnic origin, but they are not enough to make inter-group comparisons. Other studies outside the United Kingdom include over-represented sub-samples for ethnic minorities (the census-made LINDA in Sweden and the GSOEP in Germany) but the list of topics to deal with is not as rich as the one offered by the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FNSEM), that includes social indicators for education, health, employment, racial harassment, social capital, quality of housing, etc.

<sup>7</sup> This is the case, for example, in Germany, where the GSOEP also permits some inter-group comparisons (Büchel and Frick 2000).

Different explanations can be given for this unusual situation: Muslims (Bangladeshis and Pakistanis) are the last immigrant group to arrive in the UK, they come mainly from rural backgrounds and they lack the amount of stratification across class that is, for example, shown by other Asian groups such as Indians (Ansari 2002). Explanations have been so diverse that even the fact that most of them are Muslims has been pointed out as a constraint for individual upward mobility. To illustrate this situation, Tables 1 and 2 give some key features about the socio-economic differences existing among the five groups in the analysis.

**Table 1.** *Key labour features from the FNSEM*

	<b>White</b>	<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Pakistani/ Bangladeshi</b>	<b>Chinese</b>
Men's rate of unemployment	15%	31%	17%	39%	9%
Men's average earnings of full-timers in pounds sterling	331	311	317	220	368
Proportion of women in work	51%	58%	49%	15%	59%
Women Average earnings of full- timers in pounds sterling	244	270	260	189	274
Proportion of households containing any worker below 50% of the average income	9%	8%	15%	50%	18%

*Sources:* FNSEM (Berthoud 1998) and Family Resources Survey (Berthoud 2000)

Regarding income levels, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of the Chinese households are 20 percentage points above the white population. Indians show similar results to whites. 60% of Bangladeshi and Pakistani households live below the poverty line. In Britain, immigrant groups also rely to different extents on means-tested provisions: only 8% of whites, Caribbean, Indians and Chinese working couples with children receive those kinds of help while the number rises to 40% among Bangladeshi and Pakistani (Berthoud 2000).

Differences across groups on educational attainments are also significant, and even seem to be getting bigger over time (Demack, Drew and Grimsley 2000). Two clusters are easily identifiable. As is easy to guess after looking at Table 1, Indians and Chinese are

located in the upper one versus Blacks, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the lower one <sup>8</sup>. Indians and Chinese people are as likely as whites to achieve degrees or equivalent qualifications. Caribbeans fall behind. This is especially the case among Caribbean men who show very low levels of entry into higher education. Pakistani and Bangladeshi are the less qualified groups<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 2.** *GCSE attainment by ethnicity in 1995 (1970 Youth Cohort Study)*

	White	Black	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese
5+A-C General Certificate Secondary Education	42%	21%	44%	22%	23%	63%

*Source:* 1970 Youth Cohort Study (Demack, Drew and Grimsley 2000).

Having such a variation across groups will permit us to measure, compare and, if possible, explain, the preferences for co-ethnic concentration in schools among groups that equalize the socio-economic performance of the native population with others that underachieve them. This will enable me to measure the effect of discrimination over the preferences for ethnic *ghettoisation* (see theoretical references). On the other hand, groups included in the FNSEM belong to a wide array of different cultural traditions. This will also allow me to challenge certain cultural explanations given to the different pattern of social mobility and ethnic concentration found among ethnic groups. The different explanations to be tested are presented in the following theoretical framework of the research.

Ethnic concentration and its consequences are very salient issues in British society nowadays, especially after the race riots in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in the summer of

<sup>8</sup> Blacks here include Africans and Caribbean. For my empirical analysis I shall only include Caribbean as the FNSEM excludes Black Africans. Caribbean seem to be situated in an intermediate level between Pakistani and Bangladeshi and the white population regarding their level of educational attainments. In fact their rate of poverty is only slightly higher than that among white households (Berthoud 1998). For details about the differences between the two groups see Rhamie and Hallan (2002). Within the Caribbean group gender differences are important because women are a much differentiated group from men.

<sup>9</sup> Bangladeshi seems to be the community in which educational attainments are the lowest even in comparison with the Pakistani one (Haque, 2000).

2001. Lately, public authorities seem to be very concerned. Regarding education they are planning to introduce race quotas for schools as was done in the US after the Coleman Report (The Independent, 20/June/2002).

### **3. Theoretical foundations of the research**

Here I shall present a short review of the literature that explains inter-group differences among ethnic minorities' behaviour. This literature explains through a variety of mechanisms why different ethnic groups living in the same country can show diverging levels of social mobility and different patterns of community structure. After that I shall extract some hypotheses to be tested from this literature.

Functionalism predicted that with the advent of sustained economic and social development, ethnic boundaries, as well as other traditional bases of solidarity, were supposed to disappear<sup>10</sup>. For its supporters, the process that begins with reception in any host society of an ethnic group would end up with the successful incorporation of its individuals into the economic and social life of the receiving country (Veccoli 1977, Wittke 1952, Wilson 1978, Featherman and Hauser 1976)<sup>11</sup>. Up to this point, individuals from different ethnic origins would be located all along the occupational structure on the basis of merit and class but not of ethnicity. A well known feature of this prediction is the existence of a single and unique path of incorporation that any ethnic group would have to follow, the only difference among them being the timing of incorporation. Groups failing to complete the predicted path of incorporation would be the exception rather than the rule and require only ex post explanation.

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<sup>10</sup> I shall take the simplest definition of ethnic boundaries: the degree to which ethnic groups live in ethnic homogeneous contexts. For more about this concept and more complex and restrictive definitions see Hannan (1994).

<sup>11</sup> I refer to Portes' definition of incorporation (Portes 1994, 1996 and 2001), as described later.



But today ethnicity is still meaning an ascriptive, and, often exclusive identity, although, as an organizing principle it is not necessarily inflexible. Movements across ethnic boundaries, as delimited by social origin and current behaviour, are neither the rule nor very infrequent (Hannan 1994). Explanations given to the persistence of ethnic boundaries in contemporary developed societies are varied. They can be divided into two main groups: some of them “*blame*” the host society for its reluctance to incorporate some ethnic groups, others “*blame*” the ethnic minorities for their resistance to incorporate (Vermeulen and Perlmann 2000).

On the one side ethnic boundaries can be understood as the minority’s reaction to the **reluctance of the host society** to incorporate its members into the social mainstream. This reluctance might be what G. Becker describes in his seminal work *The Economics of Discrimination* (Becker 1957) in which the explanation for the existence of discrimination is the fact that natives have a “taste for discrimination”<sup>12</sup>. Discrimination might create a racial hierarchy parallel to class, that concentrate individuals in low classes. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) identify discrimination, based on phenotypic or cultural differences, as one of the reasons why sometimes immigrants tend to rely to a bigger extent on their community boundaries. Following Portes and Sensenbrenner, confrontation against the host society increases solidarity within the immigrant communities. The degree to which this reactive solidarity exists is a function of cultural and phenotypical differences with respect to the native majority. This reinforces collectively expected behaviours of any kind. The consequence of this turns out to be that the community is the main resource available to individuals so they tend to see no possibilities outside. Explanations based on the existence of discrimination have been called *structural explanations*<sup>13</sup>. This argument permits us to explain inter-group differences: groups may differ depending on the degree of discrimination they suffer from.

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<sup>12</sup> Becker demonstrates how marginal productivity analysis indicates that white employers would have to hire more blacks if they were exclusively committed to the efficiency criteria.

<sup>13</sup> Structural explanations, as opposed to cultural ones, have been mainly represented by Stephen Steinberg (Steinberg 1981 and 2000).

The other set of explanations for the persistence of ethnic boundaries is the **reluctance of the minority** to incorporate into the host society. Two reasons can be found to explain why minority would refuse the path(s) of incorporation: economic and cultural ones. The *economic* ones refer to past experiences of, more or less, continuous socio-economic disadvantage or deprivation. When this is the case, individuals rely on the economic resources available within the community for instrumental motivations. This might be because of the limited economic opportunities existing outside or because the cumulative causation that implies not doing it in the beginning of the migratory experience. For that reason many recent theories on inter group differences focus on the characteristics of the first generation movers in any particular ethnic group (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, Borjas 1992). The path of incorporation that this first generation follows after arriving in the receiving country might shape the opportunities and constraints that following generations will find (Portes and Rumbaut 1996 and 2001) and this may explain the persistence of strong inter-group differences regarding status attainment.

Other sorts of explanations have culture as the main independent variable. *Cultural* explanations blame the attachment to particular values or traditions that are supposed to prevent individuals from moving freely outside the ethnic boundaries, constraining individual behaviour. Therefore, cultural explanations account for differences in the social mobility of ethnic groups by pointing out at differences in the way that, traditionally, people from the same ethnic/national origin have rewarded effort: some groups have a taste for work/studying while others do not. Thus, certain cultures work as an economic asset for their groups while others are a burden that prevents economic mobility. The causal link between culture and status attainment tends to be very vague, imprecise and fairly tautological. It is often very difficult to find causal mechanisms behind cultural explanations. The most frequent type of account is that, for casuistic reasons (history, religion, etc), a particular group has a long term horizon, in formal terms, its members have a bigger discount factor, and this explains why they are ready to make investment now whose returns are not immediate. On the contrary, because of having lower discount factors, other groups are short-sighted, so they are not willing to make investments in goods that do not give them immediate payoffs. In sociology, cultural explanations tend to be vague and poorly committed with empirical tests, especially if quantitative. In concrete, one of the fields in which the explanatory reference to culture has

been more controversial is the social mobility of immigrant groups in developed countries because of the tautological nature of some of the explanations given<sup>14</sup>. Cultural explanations are also very rigid accounts of reality, leaving no room to change. In spite of their tautological nature, their poor empirical anchor and their inability to account for social change, cultural explanations still enjoy wide audience in academia (Sowell 1981, Harrison 1992) as well as outside, but they also receive fierce criticisms and are highly controversial<sup>15</sup>.

Above the debates between cultural and structural explanations on ethnic behaviour, status attainment research in general has been fairly attacked for its individualistic bias. Most of the time, it has tended to treat individuals as socially isolated, giving scant attention to their social embeddedness (Vermeulen 2000)<sup>16</sup>. To avoid this bias, some researchers have interpreted the residuals in multivariate regression analysis as the proof for the existence of an *ethnic effect* (whether caused by discrimination or cultural factors). This ethnic effect has been used to explain inter-group differences although it has not been properly integrated into statistical analysis.

Portes and Rumbaut's "*modes of incorporation*" (Portes and Rumbaut 1996 and 2001 and also Portes and Manning 1994) try to conciliate cultural and structural explanations of inter-group differences. The modes of incorporation stress the impact of different receiving contexts (host society) interacting with individuals that are embedded into social networks and other social structures ruled by internalised norms, reciprocity, solidarity and the sanctioning capacity of groups. They also attach importance to the pre-migration class

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<sup>14</sup> Cultural explanations of this kind are very common since Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1976). They have been frequently used to explain the successful path followed by the Jews in the USA (because of their supposed innate commercial abilities) and some Asiatic groups (rooted in Confucianism or Taoism) both in the US and Europe. Currently they are very popular among research on Muslim immigration to Europe to explain the unsuccessful career of Muslim immigrants in some Western countries (see Haque 2000 for a short review).

<sup>15</sup> Steinberg blames these cultural explanations for falling into the "*culturalistic fallacy*". They see cultures as sharply bounded entities leaving no space for change or dynamic adaptation (Steinberg 2000). For more about the controversy between structural (discrimination/class) and cultural explanations of the ethnic behaviour see Vermeulen and Perlmann (2000).

<sup>16</sup> This is specially incorrect in the research on immigration and/or ethnic minorities as far as the role of social networks in shaping individual actions and the frequent existence of socially oriented economic actions have been widely accepted by the literature on sociology of immigration and ethnicity (see mainly Portes 1995).

prevalence in each ethnic group. The modes of incorporation help to explain the ethnic variation across groups, complementing the explanatory power of individual variables. It is obvious that the persistent differences existing in educational and occupational attainments among groups <<[...]suggest the existence of broader cultural or social factors, not captured by the analysis of individual variables, that affect the collective performance of each group [...] (Portes and Rumbaut 1996:66)>>, and this makes the modes of incorporation a powerful analytic tool<sup>17</sup>.

S. Steinberg, the fiercest critic of cultural explanations, says that it is not culture but racial and class hierarchy that explains differences across ethnic groups. But, does culture make a difference? <<Yes, but only in conjunction with the material and social factors in which it is anchored and on which it depends for its sustenance>> (Steinberg 2000:67).

#### 4. Hypothesis and explanations

The first point that this paper must focus on concerns the possible existence of different degrees of preference for co-ethnic concentration at schools across the five communities included in the study. As has been said before, regarding the socio-economic performance of the ethnic minorities in Britain, the empirical literature recognises two easily identifiable clusters of groups<sup>18</sup>. *Are these differences, regarding the degree of parental preference for co-ethnic concentration at schools, reflected along the same cluster lines?*

The literature on racial composition of schools (section 1) would predict a lower amount of parental preference for co-ethnic concentration among the Chinese and Indian

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<sup>17</sup> Other successful theories accounting for the existence of inter group differences are Borja's "*ethnic capital*" and Chiswick's "*child investment model*" (Borjas 1992, Chiswick 1988).

<sup>18</sup> Recall that the Chinese and Indian communities over-achieve natives in many respects while the Bangladeshi and Pakistani fall below the thresholds imposed by the natives. Caribbeans stay in a rather intermediate category. Caribbean women outperform white women while men do worse. Their joint educational attainment record is below that of natives, Chinese and Indians but over those of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups.

groups, as far as those two communities perform better on education than the rest of the minority groups. On the other hand, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are more likely to suffer from continuous economic deprivation and discrimination, so they would tend to form closely knitted communities to overcome the lack of economic possibilities of success outside their networks (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Therefore we can expect to find higher amounts of preference for co-ethnic concentration among these last groups.

**H1: Inter-group differences hypothesis:** *Groups that are recognised in the literature as reaching lower educational and occupational attainments (Bangladeshi and Pakistan and to a lesser extent Caribbean), would tend to show higher levels of preference for co-ethnic concentration at schools.*

If those differences exist, they must be somehow explained. As has been said all along the theoretical references, the existence of inter-group differences has been detected early in the literature on social mobility regarding ethnic minorities' status attainment. This paper will try to explain why vis-à-vis the dependent variable (i.e. parental preference for concentration of co-ethnics at schools) groups are significantly different. As noted, the literature gives different explanations for the existence of inter-group variation in general, and to the existence of strong community knits in particular. Here we are going to test the two commonest explanations: the structural and the cultural ones<sup>19</sup>.

**H2: Proximity to culture of origin hypothesis:** *across groups, individuals reporting more attachment and proximity to their culture of origin against the British one show higher levels of preference for co-ethnic concentration.*

**H3: Discrimination hypothesis:** *across groups, individuals reporting more consciousness of discrimination/racism would prefer more co-ethnic concentration.*

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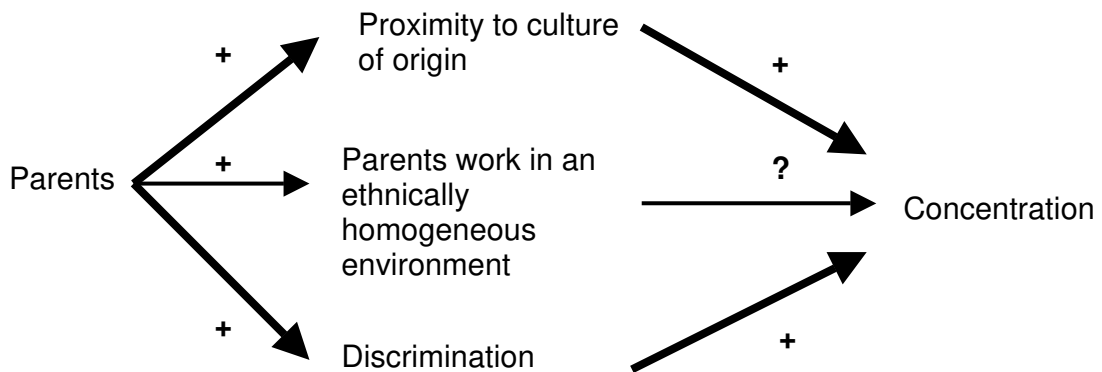
<sup>19</sup> Recall that *structural explanations* argue that inter-group differences are due to the existence of class as well as racial hierarchies in the host societies (Steinberg 1981 and 2000). On the contrary, *cultural explanations* rely more on the existence of different value systems and other cultural differences that explain various patterns of group preferences (Sowell 1981 and Harrison 1992).

Through logistic regressions, this paper will identify and clarify inter-group differences and the prevalent mechanisms behind parental preference for concentration of co-ethnics at schools. Four models will be presented; the first one will be evidence for the existence of a net group-effect after controlling for a number of socio-demographic variables. Then some variables will be introduced to measure the effect of proximity to culture of origin over the dependent variable. After that two sets of variables on discrimination will test the effect of perceiving/suffering discrimination over preference for co-ethnic concentration. It will also be tested the extent to which the existence of parental homogeneous ethnic environment correlates with preference for co-ethnic concentration in schools. In that case it will be possible to infer if school concentration of co-ethnics is a phenomenon produced by the same sort of mechanisms as those behind other types of ethnic concentration<sup>20</sup>. Finally through the introduction of interaction terms we shall try to determine differences on the effects of certain variables in different groups. By analysing the effect of having both discrimination and cultural factors acting at the same time, we shall show if cultural factors only make a difference in combination with racial harassment in order to explain levels of preference for co-ethnic concentration (Steinberg 2000).

An additional relation will be tested to see if the process of co-ethnic concentration in schools is endogenous to wider processes of ethnic concentration. In this case it will be seen whether the fact that parental working environment is ethnically homogeneous correlates with preference for ethnic homogeneous schools. Thus the introduction of this control will permit us to see if school concentration of co-ethnics is endogenous to wider processes of co-ethnic concentration. The following scheme summarizes the hypothesis to be tested and possible explanations for parental preference for co-ethnic concentration:

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<sup>20</sup> The division of this dataset divided into two differentiated questionnaires, does not permit us to include residential concentration of co-ethnics. Later on, the implications of this point will be developed.



## 5. Empirical Results

The dependent variable (**ethniconcent**), parental preference for co-ethnic concentration, is dichotomous. This is measured by the following question: <<*If you were choosing a school for an eleven year old child of yours would your choice be influenced by how many children [from your own ethnic group] there were in the school?*>> (FNSEM 1994:120)<sup>21</sup>. It is a dummy variable<sup>22</sup>.

To test the group effect four dummy variables were introduced (**Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Chinese and Pakistani**). The reference group, as usual, is the mode, in this case **Indian**. The first model show the net group effect after controlling for a set of socio-

<sup>21</sup> The formulation of this question could not be the best one as far as some respondents might have answered yes to this question meaning that they would reject schools in which ethnic concentration is higher. It was not possible to solve this shortcoming by using other questions to qualify the dependent variable. Nevertheless the empirical results fit with the theoretical arguments presented above. This means that the assumption that this misunderstanding did not happen does not seem very strong. The relevance of the topic justifies the risk of embarking into a empirical analysis taking into account this limitation.

<sup>22</sup> In the analysis the dependent variable is a binary one (1=yes, 0=no), but the question offers four possible answers (Very important influence, fairly important, not very important and no influence). The reason why I decided to recode this variable into a binary one has to do with the distribution of answers. Category 1 "very important" had few answers to develop the analysis taking into account inter-group comparisons, especially because, as is frequent in other studies about ethnic minorities in the UK, there were few Chinese respondents in the sample (Moodod et al. 1997, Demack, Drew and Grimsley 2000). Apart from that reason, I run an ordinal logistic model and the results were not very different in terms of coefficient size and significance. A test about the fit of both logit models (binary and ordinal) was done afterwards and the BIC\* (Bayesian Information Criterion) pointed to the binary model as the best fitting one. This question is asked to all respondents, having or not children.

demographic variables. **Gender** is introduced to control for the empirical regularity pointed out in some immigration literature that women (especially if not working outside the household) show a rooted attachment to their own original culture and tradition. In the case of the UK, as Table 1 shows, the groups under study show very different patterns of women's participation into the labour market. **Age** is divided into three categorical variables (<30, 31-50 and >51). This is done to test if young people show less group attachment than older ones (age was also introduced as a continuous variable with no change in the results). The reference category is age 31 to 50. **Education** tries to clarify if segregation is correlated to low levels of educational, and thereafter occupational, attainment. A difference is made between education in the UK (secondary, vocational and university) and overseas university (no change was seen by entering other qualifications). **Financial managing** tries to test the positive influence supposed to exist between poor economic conditions and higher levels of preference for segregation<sup>23</sup>. **Children** is introduced to correct for the fact that the dependent variable covers the opinion of both respondents having and not having children.

Table 3 confirms the existence of different patterns of preference for school segregation across groups. Being Indian the reference category, the model allows us to say that, as predicted by the inter-group differences hypothesis (H1), Pakistani and especially Bangladeshi (the worse off group) would be more influenced while choosing a school by co-ethnic concentration. Caribbean also shows a similar pattern. Chinese, (the only group outperforming whites and Indians in the empirical literature) prefer less degree of co-ethnic concentration than Indians. All the group coefficients are highly significant after controlling for socio-demographic variables.

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<sup>23</sup> This variable is measured by the question: <<[...] *taking everything together what best describes how you and your family are managing financially these days: very well, quite well, alright, not very well, some financial difficulties, deep financial trouble* (FNSEM 1994:143)>> The reason to choose this instead of another measure of per-capital income within household is sufficiently recognised in the literature on ethnic minorities. The threshold to define someone's financial situation as good or bad is known to be group-specific, as different individuals within each ethnic group can take difference reference points to report their economic situation (Moodod 1993, Berthoud 1998 and Portes 2001). Also because measures such as per capita income within household do not reflect many circumstances that might alter immigrants' economic situation: such as sending remittances to the homeland, financing family in-process-family reunification, etc.



**Table 3.** *Logistic regression groups + controls*

Dependent variable	Model1
<b>Ethniccent</b>	
<b>Chinese</b>	-1.289346*** (0.3586)
<b>Pakistani</b>	0.4316513*** (0.1223)
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	0.6482727*** (0.1553)
<b>Caribbean</b>	0.3864812*** (0.1243)
Gender	-0.1147305 (0.0931)
Age under 30	0.2075753* (0.1199)
Age over 51	0.0596041 (0.1324)
Secondary UK	0.0639997 (0.1420)
Vocational UK	0.0681126 (0.1317)
University UK	0.2946307* (0.1560)
University Overseas	-0.6199634*** (0.2277)
Financial managing	-0.00008 (0.0428)
Children	-0.0046875 (0.1121)
Constant	-1.12359*** (0.1999)

\*\*\* p<0,01 \*\*p<0,05 \*p<0,10  
n=2369 LR Chi2(13)=78,93\*\*\* PsR<sup>2</sup>=0,0272

Regarding the control variables, some unexpected results arise. Age under 30 and university education in the UK have a positive sign. Having a university degree in the UK and being younger than 30 lead to more preference for co-ethnic concentration in schools. The effect of education can be explained preliminarily as having some relation with possible discrimination experiences among those that attended school or university in the UK while at education. Similar explanations can be given to the age under 30's positive sign. The negative sign in the coefficient for university studies overseas can be explained by the existence of a well established self selection bias process that is inherent to immigration (Chiswick 2000); those individuals migrating are willing to get into their host society, especially if highly educated. There is another interesting remark to be made: the strikingly low and highly non-

significant coefficient of the economic situation. The preliminary conclusion extracted is that preference for co-ethnic concentration is not produced by individual or household economic concerns but from other types of explanations. The variable children is not significant so the dependent variable is not biased by reporting the answers of parents and people not having children.

Therefore group differences have been identified in the same cluster lines that were predicted. Now, this paper tries to clarify the possible mechanisms operating under the label of each ethnic group accounting for variation in the dependent variable. This is to avoid tautological explanations or transforming the ethnic labels into black-boxes. Two sets of different variables are going to be introduced in models 2 and 3. This will permit us to test the relation that the literature identifies between discrimination and proximity to own culture with preference for segregation in general. Next, via interactions shown in model 4, we will test the relationship existing between hypothesis H2 and H3, which is to say if proximity to culture of origin matters in the presence of discrimination and if there are differences for each group.

Variables introduced to test the effect of proximity to the culture of origin cover a wide array of aspects pointed out by the literature on ethnic minorities as proxies to attachment to culture of origin (Manson and Rex 1986 and Modood et al. 1994). **Otherlanguage** values 1 if the respondent speaks another language apart from English in his daily life, 0 otherwise<sup>24</sup>. **Youracism** gives 1 to the fact that the respondent disapproves of racial heterogamy in his close context. **Yourselfbritish** and **yourselfethnic** are two categorical variables in which respondents gave their opinion to a statement that classified them as British or as members of their ethnic groups (respectively); 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. **English** indicates the respondent's level of spoken English that the interviewer reports (1 being very fluent, 5 not at all)<sup>25</sup>. **Daughter** shows if the respondent

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<sup>24</sup> Patois and Creole seem to be a very important defining factor of the ethnic identity of Caribbean (Modood et al 1994)

<sup>25</sup> Low levels of English are associated with higher levels of ethnic segregation (Dorset 1998)

would also prefer a single-sex school in case of choosing one for his/her daughter<sup>26</sup>. **Visit** is a continuous variable measuring the number of times that the respondent travelled to his or her family's country of origin from 1989 to 1994. **Religion** stands for the importance that he/she attaches to religion in life (1 not at all important, 4 very important)<sup>27</sup>. **Yearsout**, **years** and **bornUK** try to include in the model the effect of being born in the UK or not and the year of arrival. It was done this way to avoid the logic lost of cases for including year of arrival and assigning no value to second generation immigrants. **Yearsout** is a continuous variable indicating the number of years that the respondent has lived out of the UK. **Years** the number of years that he has live in the UK. Interactions with the dummy **bornUK** capture the wanted effects.

The hypothesis behind those variables is that more proximity to culture is translated into more preference for segregation. *The more* another language is spoken, the lower the level of spoken English, the more rejection to racial heterogamy, the more group identification with owns ethnic group, the more frequent visits to the home country and the less recent arrival to the UK, *the more* preference for co-ethnic concentration. On the contrary, *the greater* the level of self identification as British, *the lower* the preference for co-ethnic concentration. Religion and daughter try to capture the effect of traditional cultural attitudes, *the more* traditional attitudes, *the more* intense the taste for concentration.

Table 4 shows the results of the logistic regression. The groups are still being significant with the exception of the Pakistani. This implies that the proximity to culture of origin explanation does not account for all inter-group variation regarding *ethniconcent*, but that it is enough to explain the difference existing between Indians and Pakistanis. The rest of the variables operate more or less in the predicted direction. All of them are significant except religion (not surprisingly because of the reported different role that religion plays for different groups in Modood et al. 1997) and, surprisingly, visit to the home-country, **years**,

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<sup>26</sup> This seemd to be an important factor for all Asian groups but specially for Muslims (Modood et al. 1998)

<sup>27</sup> Religion is an important defining factor of Asian minorities and for Caribbean because Christianity is already included in the British cultural heritage. Sikhs and Hindis show a lower commitment with religion than Muslims (Modood et al. 1998)

yearsout and bornUK (they are variables widely used in the literature as fine proxies to proximity to culture of origin)<sup>28</sup>.

The most important conclusion extracted from model 2 is that individuals showing more proximity to their culture of origin prefer more concentration of co-ethnics in schools, and this *independently* of the group they belong to (i.e. *controlling for group membership*). This reduces the importance given to particular cultures in certain types of literature that assumes that some of them entail higher preferences for co-ethnic concentration<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, the relation between more proximity to culture of origin and more preference for co-ethnic concentration in schools is a cross-group phenomenon.

Proximity to culture of origin can explain a great deal of variation in the preference for co-ethnic concentration at schools, so H2 can be confirmed. But, although it leaves the Pakistani group coefficient non-significant, for the rest of the cases it does not make group distinctions non significant. Therefore, group membership means something more than this model can explain. Especially striking is the case of the Caribbean group<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Interactions are not shown because they were not significant. The same exercise was tried but, instead of counting the number of years in and out the UK, it was counted as a percentage of the respondent's life in the UK and overseas. No changes were appreciated.

<sup>29</sup> This is often argued in the case of Islam. The reason adduced is that a collective sense of belonging is more important than individual freedom due to the existence of the *Ummah* (Khuri 2000:34).

<sup>30</sup> Note that while the Bangladeshi and the Chinese coefficients remain more or less stable, the Caribbean one increases hugely, from 0.386 to 1,008. This can be due to the loss of cases that happened from model 1 to model 2. This change in the magnitude of the coefficient will remain stable in the next models. Two solutions could be essayed to deal with this problem, one of them would consist of setting the lost cases in the mean values of the variables. This is not the most orthodox solution. For that reason the first model was run selecting the cases that are not excluded from the second model. The results of model 1 were not very different from running the model with all the cases. Therefore the loss of cases tends to be randomly distributed in this second model, and the increase in the Caribbean coefficient does not imply a bias in the results of the second one.

**Table 4.** *Logit regression ethniconcent + control + PCO*

Dependent variable <b>Ethniconcent</b>	Model 2
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	0,5323*** (0,1866)
<b>Caribbean</b>	1,008703*** (0,2032)
<b>Chinese</b>	-1,21223*** (0,3883)
Pakistani	0,1135681 (0,1564)
Gender	0,0833619 (0,1130)
Age <30	0,2575542** (0,1974)
Age >51	-0,0688115 (0,2726)
Secondary	0,4961145*** (0,1823)
Vocational	0,4839156*** (0,1624)
University UK	0,7372188*** (0,1630)
University overseas	-0,432350801* (0,1870)
Financial managing	-0,0240162 (0,0498)
Children	-0,1631788 (0,1340)
Otherlanguage	0,5416294*** (0,1861)
Youracism	0,5490817*** (0,1226)
Yourselfbritish	0,1682468*** (0,0452)
Yourselfethnic	-0,229821*** (0,0701)
English	0,4032404*** (0,0822)
Daughter	0,3771206*** (0,1200)
Visit	-0,035476 (0,1098)
Religion	-0,0465227 (0,0525)
Yearsin	0,0018758 (0,0109)
Yearsout	-0,0105256 (0,0115)
bornintheUK	0,0018758 (0,1852)
Constant	-2,698784*** (0,5571)

\*\*\* p<0,01 \*\*p<0,05 \*p<0,10  
n=1937 LR Chi2(22)=206,61\*\*\* PsR<sup>2</sup>=0,0880

Model 3 incorporates variables assessing the perception of discrimination in the UK by the respondent. **Racisemp** refers to the perception that British employers in general may harass their employees for racial or religious reasons (from 4 most to 0 hardly any). **Equality** values 1 if the respondent thinks that there are equal opportunities for everyone regardless of race and religious considerations. **Whiteskin**, **whitecountry**, **whiteblack** and **whitereligion** refer to the respondent's perception that in a conversation between two white persons describing him, they would feel that his/her colour of skin, country of origin, ethnic group and religion would be a key characteristic. The hypothesis on the literature behind these variables is that the more individuals perceive/experience discrimination, the more they will prefer co-ethnic concentration in general and school concentration in particular to protect their children from suffering from it.

Another variable is added to this model. **Concentwork** values 1 if the respondent's labour environment is at least composed by members of any ethnic minority in at least 50%. By adding this variable to the model it will be possible to test if there is a correlation between parents' racially homogeneous labour context and preference for co-ethnic concentration at their children's school. This will point up if the processes that generate other types of ethnic concentration are also responsible for the concentration of co-ethnics in schools, or, if on the contrary school segregation is produced by other types of mechanisms<sup>31</sup>. As has already been said, the FNSEM does not offer the possibility of including in the model residential instead of labour market concentration, nor types of concentration like industry concentration. Although residential segregation is a traditional proxy for relative socioeconomic positions among ethnic groups, the literature also points to convincing reasons to choose other types of ethnic concentration such as the one used here. Place of work concentration of co-ethnics also incorporates, to a certain extent, geographical concentration (Min Zhou and Logan 1989) and because it does not block residential mobility (Portes and Jensen 1987, Min Zhou and Logan 1991). Another reason is that the empirical literature has shown that successful participants in ethnic enclaves can maintain their links with the enclave in spite of living outside highly concentrated areas of ethnic residence (Min Zhou and Logan 1989).

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<sup>31</sup> The 50% threshold is a very demanding one so the finding will be robust.

Nothing changes in model 3 with respect to model 2 regarding the sign and significance of the group coefficients. Pakistani is still being non-significant and the rest of the groups behave with no change due to the incorporation of these variables. Among the discrimination variables, the colour of the skin, which is the most important discrimination factor, is significant. It is not striking that neither racism nor equality are non significant given the traditional and longstanding anti-harassment policy in the UK<sup>32</sup>. This can be one of the reasons why it was impossible to introduce a variable with reported experiences of direct discrimination because of their poor frequencies. It can be confirmed that the perception of an environment that discriminates is also a valid explanation for patterns of preference for co-ethnic concentration across groups. Thus we can confirm H3 on discrimination. Meanwhile, the variables included in model 2 with respect to proximity to culture of origin continue to be highly significant.

It could be argued that preference for concentration of co-ethnics at schools is explained through procedures that are different from those affecting other types of preference for co-ethnic concentration. That is confirmed by the fact that *concentwork* (the variable reporting whether the respondent works in an environment where more than 50% of the workers are from his ethnic group) is not statistically significant. Therefore, preferences for co-ethnic concentration are not produced by the same mechanisms in different settings. In particular, referring to school concentration, the importance of the proximity to culture of origin mechanism can be due to the tough implications of education with respect to the preservation of particular national/ethnic cultural traditions over generations. Across groups, it seems to be the case that parents showing higher levels of attachment to their motherland culture would be more influenced by the number of co-ethnics at schools, when choosing a school for their children. And this finding is robust even after including the second set of variables. The fact that the variable on the colour of the skin also increases the likelihood of preferring more co-ethnic concentration in schools, also points to concentration as a means to

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<sup>32</sup> As early as 1976 the Race Relations Act (and the Commission for Racial Equality) was established. They placed under the Criminal Law harassment of any kind and made its prosecution a public goal. Labour market discrimination is especially protected, including recruitment, selection processes, promotion, training, pay and benefits, redundancy, dismissal and conditions of work.

**Table 5.** *Logit ethniconcent + controls + PCO + discrimination*

Dependent variable <b>Ethniconcent</b>	Model 3
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	0,5616253*** (0,1972)
<b>Caribbean</b>	0,992538*** (0,2109)
<b>Chinese</b>	-1,103763 (0,3935)
Pakistani	0,1066112 (0,1645)
Gender	0,080189 (0,1180)
Age<30	0,2320015** (0,2034)
Age>51	-0,1549352 (0,2863)
Secondary	0,5069324*** (0,1872)
Vocational	0,5065616*** (0,1684)
Universityuk	0,7316291*** (0,1920)
UniversityExtj	-0,402314 (0,2869)
Financial managing	-0,021417 (0,0522)
Children	-0,151485 (0,1394)
Otherlanguage	0,5176293 *** (0,1887)
Youracism	0,542265*** (0,1277)
Yourselbritish	0,1682472*** (0,0477)
Yourselethnic	-0,2230053*** (0,0720)
English	0,4902392*** (0,0900)
Daughter	0,3174683*** (0,1244)
Visit	-0,024054 (0,1140)
Religionimportance	-0,522783 (0,0546)
Yearsin	-0,002573 (0,01216)
Yearsout	-0,0133275 (0,0116)
BornintheUK	0,1716213 (0,1895)
Concentwork	0,1782883 (0,1536907)
Racisemp	0,0424551 (0,0424)
Equality	0,0537194 (0,1339)
Whiteskin	0,2500701** (0,1210)
Whitecountry	-0,0322711 (0,1210)
Whiteblack	-0,1695508 (0,1378)
Whitereligion	0,0883063 (0,1277)
Constant	-0,2850559*** (0,5919)

\*\*\* p<0,01 \*\*p<0,05 \*p<0,10  
n=1834 LR Chi2(29)=215,09\*\*\* PsR<sup>2</sup>=0,0966



protect children from racial discrimination. And these two intervening factors appear to be exogenous to wider processes of co-ethnic concentration.

A final model is now presented showing if the effect of each variable is similar across groups. By including interaction terms it can be seen whether the gradient for some of the groups is different from others or not, meaning that the importance of some particular variables is higher for certain groups. The results shown in model 4 are very clarifying. Interactions enable the model to explain completely the preference for co-ethnic concentration in the case of the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Caribbean minorities. For the first two groups, higher levels of preference in comparison to the reference category is mediated by the importance attached to religion in their daily life (**religion\*pakistani** and **religion\*bangladeshi**) and by the report of discrimination (**country\*bangladeshi** and **skin\*pakistani**). In the case of the Caribbean this intense preference seems to have to do with discrimination factors (**educintheUK\*Caribbean**): having participated in the British education system increases the likelihood of preferring more concentration of co-ethnics for the children's school<sup>33</sup>.

The introduction of these interaction terms turns both Pakistani and Bangladeshi coefficients negative and highly significant. Interaction terms leave the Pakistani and Bangladeshi coefficients under the effect of having the interaction terms in value 1. That is to say, the two coefficients measure the effect of being Bangladeshi and Pakistani with no importance attached to religion and thinking that the colour of the country of origin and the colour of the skin is not at all important for white people, *in comparison to being Indian*. Therefore, once these effects are discounted, Bangladeshi or Pakistani people would prefer even less concentration of co-ethnics than the reference category, the upward mobile Indian group.

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<sup>33</sup> For the sake of parsimony, education in the United Kingdom was recoded in one variable (**educintheUK**). The same effect was visible by desegregating it into the former categories. Thus this change does not affect the results.

**Table 6.** *Logit ethniconcent+controls+PCO+discrim+intrac.*

Dependent variable <b>Ethniconcent</b>	Model 5
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	-2.831663** (1.3822)
<b>Chinese</b>	-1.260933*** (0.3980)
Caribbean	.3347008 (0.3001)
<b>Pakistani</b>	-2.399635*** (0.8999)
Gender	.0730828 (0.1192)
Age<30	.3423831 (0.2052)
Age>50	0.1359102 (0.2872)
<i>educintheuk</i>	.332425* (0.1895)
UniversityExtj	-.3920844 (0.2863)
Financial Managing	-.0158532 (0.0529)
Children	-.2403095 (0.1432)
<i>Otherlanguage</i>	.5435766*** (0.1925)
<i>Youracism</i>	.474946*** (0.1294)
<i>Yourselfbritish</i>	.1784299*** (0.0484)
<i>Yourselfethnic</i>	-.2227496*** (0.0725)
<i>English</i>	.4101492*** (0.0945)
<i>Daughter</i>	.2571975** (0.0974)
Visit	-.0373678 (0.1159)
Religionimportance	-.1111375* (0.05794)
<i>Yearsin</i>	-.0067759 (0.0122)
<i>Yearsout</i>	-.0078285 (0.0115)
BornintheUK	-.051557 (0.1918)
Concentwork	.1997903 (0.1551)
Racisemp	.0505423 (0.0355)
Equality	.0915145 (0.1352)
Whiteskin	.1460794 (0.1359)
Whitecountry	-.1305339 (0.1256)
Whiteblack	-.1725686 (0.1392)
Whitereligion	.032063 (0.1303)
<i>Religion*Pakistani</i>	.6022145** (0.2363)
<i>Religion*Bangladeshi</i>	.6968782** (0.3531)
<i>Whiteskin*Pakistani</i>	.6638892** (0.2831)
<i>Whitecountry*Bangladeshi</i>	1.06723*** (0.3781)
<i>EducintheUK*Caribbean</i>	.7971579** (0.2979)
Constant	-2.505427*** (0.6031)

\*\*\* p<0,01 \*\*p<0,05 \*p<0,10

n=1834 LR Chi2(33)=244.79\*\*\* PsR<sup>2</sup>=0,1104

In conclusion, the higher levels of preference of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani for co-ethnic concentration at schools is mediated through both cultural proximity (attachment to religion, identification with Islam is in both cases over 90%) and a certain degree of perception of discrimination. The mere introduction of the religion interaction terms (religion\*pakistani and religion\*bangladeshi) is not enough for a complete explanation of their initial preference for segregation with respect to Indians. This only leaves the Bangladeshi and Pakistani coefficients non-significant. They only turn out to be negative and highly significant after adding the discrimination interaction terms. In the case of the Caribbean, the effect of education seems to be related with previous experiences of discrimination in the educational system that pushed parents to prefer schools with other Caribbean.

The fact that identification with Islam increases the likelihood that parents prefer a school with a higher degree of concentration of co-ethnics is consistent with some findings in the empirical literature that show a great parental concern on religion among Muslim parents talking about their children's education (Driessen, Bezemer and Bezemer 1999). This is due to their worries regarding the course of some religious duties such as diet and dress requirements (Anwar 1994) or the existence of mixed schools for boys and girls (Ballard 1979). This interpretation of the effect of religion for the Muslim communities in this analysis is more consistent with the relevance of discrimination factors than other traditional explanations to the concentration of Muslim immigrants<sup>34</sup>.

Before ending this part, a short reference must be made to the big number of lost cases. The FNSEM is well known for being problematic for this particular reason. It can be better to set lost cases into mean values in some variables in order to avoid more lost. This was not presented because the results offered by excluding lost cases were similar from the first to the fourth model. The loss of cases was proportional across groups, being the Chinese

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<sup>34</sup> Khouri for examples argues that the concept of *Ummah* (the community of believers) and the primacy of religion in any Muslim society are behind the fact that formal Islam cannot consider Muslims a minority even when the majority of the population in a particular society is non Muslim. Muslim societies have to be ruled by a Muslim ruler. When this is not the case (like in western societies that receive Muslim immigrants), Muslims tend to concentrate in "cultural enclaves" legally and socially separated from the rest of society (Khouri 2000:34)

one the more problematic because of the low initial number of cases included in the general sample. All the models were also run with the minimum number of cases (model 3) with no particular change on the coefficients and their significance.

## 6. Discussion and conclusions

This paper proved the existence of clear inter-group differences regarding parental preference for co-ethnic concentration in British schools. These differences fit with the general pattern drawn by the empirical research on ethnic minorities in the UK: the downward mobile groups (Bangladeshi, Pakistani and, to a limited extent, Caribbean) show higher preference for school segregation than upward mobile groups (Indians and especially Chinese).

Arguments linking proximity to culture of origin and a trend towards ethnic segregation, also find empirical support in this paper. Speaking other languages than English in daily life, not being fluent at spoken English and showing a high level of identification with one's own ethnic/national minority, is positively correlated with more preference for co-ethnic concentration at schools. But this argument is not enough to account for the existence of inter-group differences (it only reduces the differences existing between Indians and Pakistanis). This is clearly insufficient to explain why Bangladeshis and Caribbean also prefer more school segregation and Chinese people less than Indians. The results of this research show that no particular culture can be pointed out as the main factor affecting positively preferences for co-ethnic concentration. All the individuals reporting more proximity to their culture of origin also report more preference for school concentration of co-ethnics, *and this controlling for group membership*. Therefore cultural explanations for patterns of ethnic concentration should be rejected.

Arguments about the correlation between community closure and discrimination find confirmation in this work. Only one of the variables included in the statistical model was significant, but it was the most relevant one (the colour of the skin). The inclusion of these

variables in a joint model with those referring to the proximity to culture of origin, do not change the effect of the former ones.

The three groups preferring more concentration than the mode (the Indians) show that the attachment to original culture is not the only factor mediating high levels of preference for co-ethnic concentration. It is also through the perception of a hostile context that discriminates, that they may turn into closely knit community structures. Here, empirical evidence was given supporting the argument that, at most, it is through both cultural and structural factors that preference for co-ethnic concentration is to be explained.

Regarding Muslim groups, the empirical evidence provided by this paper rejects the sufficiency of cultural explanations frequently assigned to the behaviour of Muslim immigrants. Some of these argue that the strong sense of belonging to a supra individual community, that is inherent to Islam, is responsible for Muslim preference for segregation and for their poor socio-economic performance in general<sup>35</sup>. On the contrary, this paper shows how proximity to culture of origin explains a great deal of variation regarding the dependent variable across groups and how it leaves the Bangladeshi coefficient non significant while more than 90% of the Bangladeshis in the sample are Muslims.

To finish I shall point out at some of the strong and weak points of my work. My paper offers an analysis of preferences for segregation. These kinds of studies are scarce. Normally studies of ethnic concentration do not deal with preferences but with data drawn from already segregated individuals. In this sense my work offers an analysis that clearly helps to contextualise studies of ethnic concentration. I presented an empirical work integrating theories that are rarely empirically tested. I have been able to put in dialogue different sources of competing literature that need to test their empirical anchor. By doing so I could explain the pattern of preference for segregation that is shown by Bangladeshi, Caribbean and Pakistani people in Britain. My findings are helpful to reject ad hoc cultural

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<sup>35</sup> Berthoud (1998:51) refers to pieces of empirical research also using the FNSEM, showing that it is not only Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims (over 94% in both cases) but also the proportion of Muslim Indians in the sample that had a higher rate of poverty than non Muslim Indians. Berthoud refers to family structure (number of children) and low female involvement in the labour market, as possible explanations. He also criticises others blaming religious values for their high levels of poverty

explanations that are proliferating without being convincingly tested, explanations, based on the constraints that certain cultural backgrounds impose on the socio-economic success of immigrants in Western countries.

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